MISCELLANY.

Little Fingers.

Busy little fingers,
Every where they go;
Rosy little fingers,
The sweetest that I know.
Now into my work-box,
All the buttons finding,
Tangling up the knitting,
Every spool unwinding!
Now into the basket
Where the keys are hidden,
So mischievous looking,
Knowing it forbidden.
Then in mother's tresses,
Now her neck enfolding,
With such sweet caresses
Keeping off a scolding.
Darling little fingers,
Never, never still,
Make them, Heavenly Father,
One day do thy will.

[Children's Picture Magazine.

UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH.

CONCLUDED.

The farmer left the house and ran on to the blacksmith's forge, where the smith and his son were getting to work.

"Martin, I'm in a great hurry, goin' to the fair, an' I want ye to run over wud somethin' to cut a chain for me; 'twon't take you five minutes. Martin, you niver did a betther day's work in your life, if you'll come as fast as yer legs'll carry ye!" He said this in an under tone while the son's back was turned, "and whisht for all sakes!" he added, clenching his hand, and shaking it at the unconscious young Vulcan; then he rushed out, leaving the father grasping a bar of iron and staring after him.

The smith, with the freemasonry that exists among the Irish peasantry, perceived that there was secrecy and trouble in the way, and that his good faith was relied on. He picked up some tools, muttered an excuse to his son, and followed hastily.

When Pat Moran reached home he was met at the door by Kate.

"Is he safe?"

"Yes, father, he's in the room atin a bit."

Her father went in, and, going up to his strange guest, said: "I'm goin' to do what I can for you, Tim." Then they all began discussing eagerly the best way for the fugitive to take.

"But, Lord! The whole counthry'll be roused afther him!" broke in the farmer, dejectedly, as they suggested various lonely hill-paths and cross-cuts. "Lord! they'll root up the ground after him! I must thry though, I must thry. Heaven mend me! Aff I didn't lave the horses all this time, an' niver," he ejaculated, catching sight of his forgotten team, who had dragged the plough after them to the adjoining meadow, and were grazing there.

A sudden thought struck him, and he hastily returned to the house with his face flushed. As he entered the kitchen he ran against the smith, Martin Leary, who was staring about him.

"Martin, you're thrue an' honest, I know, an' you'd do a good turn as soon as any man I know," said Pat Moran, abruptly.

"There's me hand on it," returned the smith, bringing down his black fist on the other's shoulder. In a few words he was told what was required of him, and also of the bright thought that had just occurred to Pat Moran.

"Here! Let me at it," cried the smith, enthusiastically grasping his chisel and hammer. Thereupon the farmer led him into the little room, where Kate was administering hot tea and smoking griddle-cake to the poor fellow, who ate and drank almost mechanically, with his eyes fixed on the pretty face and busy hands that administered to him.

"Here, Tim, 's some one to do you a good turn. Hould out your hands, me boy! Peggy," turning to his wife, who was devoutly groaning and telling her beads in the corner, "go an' get my old clothes; an', Kitty, run for that yellow clay in the kitchen garden! Run!" She did as she was bid, and when she returned with the clay, was desired to keep out of the room for a few minutes.

"Mother, honey, what are they doing?" she inquired.

"Sorra bit o' me knows, acushla. On'y your father has some plan in his head! Oh! Kitty, agra, I'm thrimblin to think of the throuble he may be gitten into—Och, Pat, honey, what are ye goin' to do at all?" she cried, addressing her husband, who came out of the bed-room, dressed in his best blue swallow-tailed coat, corduroys, and new gray stockings.

"I'm goin' to show this new sarvint boy where he's to plough, afore I go to the fair," said the farmer, with a wink to the two women, who stared open-eyed at the change of the condemned man, with the fatal prison garb dripping with mud and sand, and fettered wrists, into a careless, easy-going looking young laborer, in a suit of well-worn and patched frieze and corduroy, dirty and clayey, with lumps of clay sticking on his brogues, a rakish "caubeen" slouched over his eyes, and a black "dhudeen" between his lips.

"Now come on! 'Tis time you were at your work; his name's Maurice Slattery, Kate, an' he's wud us this month back!"

"Oh, father, honey! Oh, Pat, acushla!" cried the wife and daughter with admiration.

The young man, taking the pipe from his mouth, said solemnly, "May God for iver bless you, Pat Moran, an' you, Mrs. Moran, an' you, Kate, an you, Martin Leary," and he grasped their hands all round.

"Come, 'tis six o'clock," said the farmer. "You know where the plough is, Maurice Slattery. An', Kate, you're to bury them clothes. Come, an' I'll show you where."

Half an hour afterwards, he was riding slowly to the fair on his young horse, which was to be sold, casting cautious glances backward at the field by the river, where he could see his horses ploughing, and his new servant boy toiling quietly after them.

* * * *

Such confusion and excitement had not been known for years in the old cathedral town. Police, there were none in those days; but the whole garrison had been turned out in search of the escaped felon. Groups of red-coats perambulated the streets, the roads leading to the country, and even the lanes and meadows. Hundreds of country folk, who had come in to see the execution, also crowded the town. The throng on the prison hill was so dense that the farmer could scarcely proceed a step. They were all talking vociferously, in Irish and English—every one giving his or her version of the wonderful story. Some declared that the prisoner had not escaped, and that it was a device by the authorities to conceal some foul play. When Pat Moran had elbowed his way with great difficulty, almost to the prison gates, he looked eagerly for the objects of his search—some of Tim's own people, whom he discovered sitting and standing together in an excited group.

"Pat Moran, d'ye bleeve this?" said one of the men, hoarsely, clutching the farmer's coat. "D'ye bleeve that poor Tim has got out of their cursed thrap?"

"John Welsh, Tim did get out!"

"Whist! Lord save us!" they all broke in, with one voice.

"'Tisn't safe to say more. I'm thrimblin that some of them fellers wid the brass buttons will hear me," glancing toward the turnkey, dimly visible behind the iron grating; "but you, John Welsh, an' you, Mick Power, come wud a car to-night, to the cross-roads beyant the ferry, at 12 o'clock, an' there'll be a friend to see you. Whist, for your sowls!"

The prison warders were not long in discovering by what means the captive had effected his escape, and from the opening the search was carried above ground to the mouth of the sewer where it emptied itself into the river. A venturesome spirit even crept up a few dozen yards of the black passage, but speedily returned, vowing that nothing could live an hour in it. Nevertheless, they sought for foot-marks on the river brink; but the friendly tide had been before them. Still, on the supposition that he might have lived to reach the river and swim across, a party of prison officials and soldiers were ferried over, and marched in a body to Farmer Moran's house.

Kate was busy feeding chickens, and her mother peeling potatoes, when they both caught sight of the gleam of scarlet and white cross-belts, and heard loud tones and footsteps.

"Lord, be good and marciful to us evermore, amin! Protect and save us!" muttered Peggy Moran, dropping the potato she was peeling, and turning with a face of terror to her daughter, who whispered, without turning her head—

"Mother, darlin', don't purtend anything, for all sakes. Chucky, chucky! Chuck, chuck, chuck!" she went on, raising her voice gaily, as she scattered the food.

"Servant, sir," she said, wiping her hands, and curtseying to a tall stout officer, who strode up to the door, scattering the chickens by the clanking of his spurs and sword.

"Is this Farmer Moran's, my good girl?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you his daughter?"

"Yes, sir; and this is my mother."

"Where's your husband, Mrs. Moran?" said the officer, turning to the poor woman, who was endeavoring to look calm.

"At the fair, sir. Oh, sure, 'tisn't got into any harm Pat has, sir?"

"What harm should he get into; about this runaway prisoner, you mean?" said the officer, trying to startle her into some admission.

"What man, sir?" cried Kate. "Law, mother, honey! That's what the boy was telling us!"

"What boy?" said the officer, now off his guard.

"A boy, sir—oh! a ra'al little chap—a gossoon—run in here a while ago an' said the man that's to be hung's got out an' run away—an' sure we didn't bleeve him!" said Kate, with such an air of self-possession and innocent inquisitiveness, that the officer was completely deceived. A boy had come in as she had said, and told the wonderful story, so she told the truth in that part of her assertion.

"Well, Mrs. Moran," said the officer, "you've no objection to have your premises searched, I suppose? It is suspected that the prisoner is hidden somewhere about here."

"Musha, what put that in yere heads?" said Peggy Moran, angrily. "Faith! it's somethin' else we'd be thinking of, an' not meddlin' wud the law; but you're welcome to sarch away, sir, as long as ye like, only it's a quare thing to have an honest man's house searched like a rogue's!"

"I must do my duty," said the officer.

"Sure the gintleman won't do us any hurt, mother," said Kate. "Please don't let 'em thrample the potatoes, sir!" she called out, as the men turned into the little garden."

Pat Moran's words were almost fulfilled, that the pursuers would root up the ground in search of the fugitive. Not a bush or a hollow about the ground, not a loft or cranny in the house or outbuilding, but was thoroughly investigated. At last, with a sickening feeling of apprehension, Kate saw the band disperse themselves over the fields, and three soldiers run across the ploughed field to question the man who was ploughing.

Welsh's blood ran cold as he saw them coming; but recollecting that they did not know his face, he glanced over his shoulder, and shouted in a feigned voice to the horses.

The soldiers were young and careless. They merely asked two or three questions, in an irrelevant way, staring up at the sky, and down at the clay, as if they expected to discover the prisoner transformed into a spirit of earth or air. Then they ran off again, and Welsh breathed freely until he spied six other soldiers advancing toward him, with the officer in charge, and two others in dark frock coats, with shining buttons and red collars.

"God help me! Sure, I can only die!" he murmured.

"How long have you been ploughing?" said the officer.

"Sence daybreak, sir. Woa! An' hard work I have had; every one runnin' to me sence breakfast, axin' me did I see the man that run away. Steady, there!" The laborer sulkily keeping his back toward the prison warders.

"He is supposed to have swam the river," said the officer; "and if so, and you have been here since daybreak, he could not have got over without you seeing him."

"Sorra haporte I see, sure, if he did, an' he must be a brave swimmer, to come across that river this time o' year, an' the wather like ice," said the plough-boy, with an incredulous grin; "sure he might land down farther, it's a grad'a'al narrar, but anyhow I see nothin'—Conshume ye, straight!" he growled at the horse, and bending double over the plow, furrowed on. The officer called his men hurriedly back to the country road.

The long day drew to a close, and when Kate came to call the plough-boy to his supper, whispering that there was no one in but her father and mother, he felt as if he had lived a life-time in the past twenty-four hours.

The farmer laughed heartily in telling some of the stories which were rife about the prisoner's disappearance. His body had been picked up four miles down the river, his clothes had been found by a turnkey under a bush, and his handcuffs had been picked up—filed half across—in a bog ten miles away.

"Faith, I bursted laughin'," said Pat Moran, "when I knew that Martin Leary had them welded into linch-pins, and that Katy had the clothes buried in last year's manure hape!"

So they chatted pleasantly and securely, while the rescued man sat silent from thankfulness and gratitude, only casting side looks at Kate and sighing heavily.

"Musha, man, don't be sighin'!" cried the farmer, jocosely; "you'll be kickin' up yer heels at your weddin' in Ameriky this time twelvemonth, plase God!"

"No, Mister Moran, I'll never marry any one in Ameriky," answered Welsh.

Kate got up to put on fresh fuel immediately.

"Och, never fear, you will," replied the farmer, with good-natured obtuseness.

"Musha, Misther Moran, 'tisn't every man 'ud give his daughter to one like me," said Welsh, in a low tone.

"Arrah, Tim, agra, who'd think the worse o' you for having got into trouble an' got out again?" pursued the farmer.

"Ah, 'tisn't every one is like you," said Welsh, sighing.

"Oh, sure no one will know anything in Ameriky, Tim; that's where you're goin' I suppose?" said Mrs. Moran, gravely and coldly.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Welsh. "I hope so."

The good woman was far more acute than her husband, and disliking the turn the conversation was taking, began to introduce other topics; but with little success, as her husband grew sleepy and stupid, Kate sat quite silent, and Welsh was sad. Thus they sat until 12 had struck, and then Welsh and the farmer rose, to walk on to the cross roads, where the car was to be in readiness, with his relatives as convoy and body-guard.

Welsh shook Mrs. Moran's hard hand and kissed it in the fulness of his emotion, uttering broken words of gratitude and blessing. Then he turned to Kate, who was weeping silently; he strove to speak, but words failed him, and he grasped her hand passionately and turned away.

"I'll shut the gate afther ye," said Kate, following them out into the darkness. So she did, and Welsh delayed a moment, helping her to find the loop and staple, probably; though he strove to put a few hasty words together, which had no reference to the gate.

"Keep up yere heart, Kate, agra," he whispered; "I'll send ye a lether whin I get safe over, plase God!"

Welsh sailed for England in a small coasting vessel, and thence from Liverpool, where he remained concealed for some weeks until the ardor of the pursuit after him had abated, he embarked on board a fast sailing vessel—for there were no steamers in those days—for America. When he landed, he sought the home of a relative who had been settled in the new country for some years, and by industry and strict honesty—for the dreadful lesson taught him was not wasted—he very soon became independent of his cousin, and had his own snug house and thriving farm.

He wrote regularly to the Morans; to the father first, then to the mother, and lastly to the daughter. When he had amassed a little money he wrote again to the farmer, telling the astonished man his hopes and wishes concerning Kate. Peggy Moran angrily declared her husband to have been blind all along—as there is no doubt he was—but she positively refused to listen for a moment to the audacious suitor. However, "time works wonders." Her violent opposition died away gradually, and Kate waited patiently. At the end of five years, her father being then dead, she and her mother departed for the land beyond the sea.

This tale was related to the writer by a gray-haired widow, an Irish emigrant who had returned, after many years, from America, to die at home. Though her form was bent by the weight of more than seventy years, her memory was clear and retentive, and her voice trembled and her dim blue eyes sparkled, as of yore, with excitement in her recital of the perils undergone by Welsh, the lover of her youth, and the fond and faithful husband whose joys and sorrows she had shared for forty years. And now she had come home to die in the little cottage by the river where she had first known him, and where she had first succored him in the hour of his danger and distress. "On'y it's a poor thing to think that I can't share his grave in the churchyard where his people lie," concluded the widow, sadly, "but bless God, we'll soon meet again."